**ELL Presentation – March 27, 2012**

**Summary:**

The presenters discussed with the class how instruction can meet the needs of ELL students. We gained a broad understanding of how non-English speaking students must be immersed into the language and the culture in order to become fluent in English. It is important that we understand the process of language acquisition if we are successful in helping these students become successful American citizens.

It is important that ELL students have a dominant first language. They can become successful students in the American schools but parents should continue to speak the first language in the home and the schools will teach the students English.

Storm Lake CSD has several programs and services that they offer to families to the students in the district. Some of those services are interpreting services, learning English programs, home visits, family conferences, etc.

The presenters talked about what happens at Storm Lake Elementary when a new ELL student arrives in their district, which happens on a weekly basis. Students are placed in the regular education classroom as soon as possible regardless of their English proficiency. Students need an opportunity to just get accustomed to the environment. Students who are non-English speaking will be immersed into the English language throughout the school day. Storm Lake Elementary has nine Instructional Assistance who will work with thee students during most of the day. The presenters emphasized the importance that teachers understand that they must teach the student. Jolene also presented some of the curriculum materials that they use with their students.

**Reflection:**

The personal testimonies of the three guest speakers were amazing to listen to as a future educator. I think we must gain a better understanding of the process of assimilation into our culture. I was especially interested in the acquisition of language process that ELL students must have opportunities to experience. I thought it was very interesting of how the common understanding was that language acquisition is a continual process for these ELL students.

I also think it is very important that we all understand the culture that students are bring to our schools and try to honor that culture. I think we must be careful not to just make them fit into our culture. I also gained a much better understanding about how as educators we must support these students to be accustomed to our language and culture. We must not expect them to be Americans but to acclimate into our culture while maintaining their own culture.

It was very interesting to listen to Jolene talk about what they do at Storm Lake Elementary when a non-English speaking student enrolls at the district. I understand now the importance of staff understanding the culture and process of language acquisition steps when acclimating students into the culture.